

# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

MAILING ADDRESS: P. O. Box 50833 • Nashville, TN 37205 • (615) 356-4TCF(4823) • Nashville

Website: [www.tcfnashville.org](http://www.tcfnashville.org)



Chapter Leaders: Cheryl Carney, (615) 347-8341

Kris Foust, (931) 216-7801, email: [hedsupkris@yahoo.com](mailto:hedsupkris@yahoo.com)

Newsletter Editor: Melanie Ladd, (615) 513-5913, email: [melanierladd@gmail.com](mailto:melanierladd@gmail.com)

Treasurer: Ed Pyle, (615) 712-3245, email: [epyle@wyattfirm.com](mailto:epyle@wyattfirm.com)

Outreach: David Gibson, (615) 308-2520, email: [davidg14@bellsouth.net](mailto:davidg14@bellsouth.net)

Regional Coordinators: Polly Moore, (931) 962-0458, email: [lolly39@aol.com](mailto:lolly39@aol.com)

Dana Young (931)581-7090

The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive.

*Welcome: The Nashville chapter meets at 3:00 P.M. on the second Sunday of each month in the American Builders & Contractors (ABC) Building, 1604 Elm Hill Pike, Nashville, TN 37210. (See Mailing address above.) Park and enter at the rear of the building.*

*We truly regret that we have no accommodations for young children, but teenagers and older siblings are welcome to attend.*

## November Program:

### Ask It Basket

Bereaved parents are often plagued with questions regarding their grief. If there is something bothering you, bring your questions for the basket. This meeting will provide an especially good opportunity for those of us who are farther along in our grief to give the benefit of our experience to those who are just beginning their sad journey by addressing the questions. We invite our old-timers to come and lend a hand. Together we can find the support we need. Our regular sharing sessions will follow this program.



### Candlelight Memorial Service Scheduled for December 8 at the ABC Building

*This is a very moving and powerful program. All family members, siblings and friends are invited to join us. Following the service, we invite you to remain for fellowship and refreshments.*

**It would be most appreciated if you would bring a pickup snack to share. Be sure to put your name on your container.**

It is important that **everyone** wishing to have their child's photo in the memorial service follow very carefully the instructions on page 4 of this newsletter.

**THERE IS A SUBMISSION DEADLINE THAT MUST BE STRICTLY ADHERED TO.**

We would like for all of you to enjoy this opportunity to see your child on the big screen! If you have not previously attended the candlelight memorial service, we encourage you to do so.

**Information and Photo Submission  
Form are on Page 7**

*We remember our children with love and gratitude. We miss their faces,  
their voices and their smiles. And we do not forget--*

*In the month of their births—*



**Christopher William Black**

November 23

Son of

Ray and Linda Black

**Taylor Christian Brewer**

November 2

Son of

Justin and Tracy Brewer

Grandson of

Don and Sherry Eakes and

Penny Waters

**Eric DeWayne Brown**

November 18

Son of

Sharon Brown

**Juri Austin Bunetta**

November 22

Son of

Al and Dawn Bunetta

**John Roaten Cheadle, III**

(Ro)

November 29

Son of

John R. and Nancy Cheadle

**Richard Lee Crouse**

November 7

Son of

Joel and Teresa Crouch

Brother of Jennifer

**David Lee Engen**

November 16

Son of

Allen Engen and Barbara Engen

**James Austin Garcia**

(Austin)

November 30

Son of

Danny and Sherri Garcia

**Cory N. Hood**

November 8

Son of Debby Hood

**Rahmir Scott Kendrick**

November 3

Son of

DeMille Brown and

Felicia Brown

**Cole Hansen Kilgore**

November 14

Son of Henry and Kathy Beeler

Nephew of Kacey Gant

**Cami Leigh Parrish**

November 19

Daughter of Debbie Hampton

**Mark Elliott Reischman**

November 2

Son of Bill and Jean Reischman

**Alexis Riner**

November 11

Daughter of

P. J. and Tasha Ashford

**Robert Andrew Way Swift**

November 12

Son of

Travis Teal and Gayle Swift Teal

**Lindsay Ware**

November 16

Daughter of Scott Ware

**James Donald Warren**

(Donnie)

November 20

Son of John and Georgia Warren

Brother of John David (Johnny)

**Joe Vick**

November 6

Son of Kay Bogle

*And in the month of their deaths*



**Daniel Bowen Bishop**

November 24

Son of Kevin and Molly Bishop

**Daniel Matthew Bledsoe**

November 11

Son of Dan and Barbara Bledsoe

Brother of Jason and Kaci

**Rebecca Jean Cashion**

November 1

Daughter of

Tery and Terri Cashion

**Jonathan Clemmons**

November 23

Son of Billy Clemmons and

Connie Clemmons

**Stephen Joseph Donlon**

November 24

Son of

Patrick and Ellen Donlon

Brother of

Katy, David, John, and Elizabeth

**James Wesley Evans**

(Snowman)

November 24

Son of

Brenda L. Nelson

Brother of Heather

**Stephen Christopher Gould**

November 18

Son of

Herb and Susan Gould

**Jason Kemp**

November 12

Son of

John and Jammie Kemp

**Cami Leigh Parrish**

November 19

Daughter of Debbie Hampton

**Paul Edward Townsend**

November 5

Son of

Gerald and Jackie Townsend

*If your compassion does not include yourself,  
it is incomplete.*

Jack Kornfield

## GIFTS OF LOVE AND REMEMBRANCE

*We are deeply grateful for the voluntary gifts of love that make it possible for The Compassionate Friends to offer comfort to those families who do not know today that they will need us tomorrow.*

*Rose H. Bartlett  
In loving memory of  
her grandson,  
Chase Lee Harris,*

*Son of  
Kirk and Shayne Harris  
and  
Paul and Stacey Fish*

*Linda Black  
In loving memory of her son,  
Christopher William Black*

*Jim and Loretta Bolton  
In loving memory of their son,  
James Michael Bolton (Mikey)*

*Barbara Davies  
Through Nationwide  
Workplace Giving Program  
In loving memory of  
her stepsons,  
Roy James Davies and  
Taylor Davies  
Sons of Roy Davies*



*Danny and Sherri Garcia  
In loving memory of their son,  
James Austin Garcia (Austin)*

*Jean Overcash  
In loving memory of her son,  
Michael Stanley Overcash*

*Received from  
the Kroger Plus Community  
Rewards Program  
\$121.82 9/10/19\**

*\*To benefit TCF, go to the Kroger website and click on "Community Rewards"; then follow the instructions on that page. After that, when you shop at Kroger, swipe your Plus Card or key in your phone number when you check out, and Kroger will donate dollars to TCF. It's a free and easy way to support your chapter.*

*Each month, Allegra Print & Imaging, 601 Grassmere Park, donates the printing of this newsletter as a gift to the families of TCF. Deanna Brown and her family assemble, label, sort and mail the newsletter in loving memory of her son, Marcus Dean Brown.  
We appreciate so much these people and their generosity to all of us.*

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## Uncharacteristic Behaviors

When Junior, the National Zoo's resident ape went on his escape travels a few months ago, the story was recorded in the local papers. This was probably because he came close to hopping over his barrier and into the laps of his human observers, many of them children. The press called this "uncharacteristic behavior" and, in a side note, added that his long time mate, Pency had recently died.

Now you and I would put all of this into proper perspective and agree, "Of course!" And then we would reflect upon our own "uncharacteristic behaviors" following the death of our beloved (grand) child (ren). Many times these behaviors confound and confuse those close to us. How far will we go beyond our barriers? And will we return and be "ourselves" again? I was amazed at emotions I had never felt so strongly before. I thought that anger would become a permanent part of my reactions and I welcomed any kind of release from it. Confronting it and dealing with it was difficult. Sadness settled upon me like a soggy fleece and I thought that I might never shrug it off! And the apathy with which I met each day was very concerning, indeed! Junior's escapade brought all of my own "uncharacteristic behaviors" up from the not so distant past.

Amusing?...a little; but more than that I wanted to shout with the children who watched him that late summer day, and encourage him to run and run, shaking off the grief and sadness of losing his beloved Pency.

Lorie Hartsig  
TCF St. Mary's County, MD

## Hope

*My heart has been broken.  
My soul has been crushed.  
My mind has gone to depths I never knew existed.  
Places where only God,  
In His most infinite Love, could understand.  
And even He could not console me at times.*

*But I am here on earth,  
For whatever reason I still do not know:  
And I have hope that, in time,  
God will show me the way  
And give rhyme to my reason.  
So I wait in hope for a future  
And a new beginning.*

Kathleen Leeper  
TCF Valley Forge, PA



## Standing

*People say  
“Oh you are doing so well,  
you are so strong,  
you are an inspiration!”  
We do not feel strong.*

*We feel shaken to the core,  
Saddened beyond belief,  
Pain beyond comprehension,  
Forever changed.*

*What do they see that we cannot see?*

*That a horrible storm  
unexpectedly ripped through  
our lives and we are  
still standing*

*They are amazed  
We are paralyzed*

*Still Standing*

Julie Short  
TCF Southeastern Illinois Chapter

## To Parents Who Have Lost a Child Through Suicide

Parents and siblings of a young person who has completed suicide face an almost overwhelming burden of emotions. It is one of the cruelest tragedies that can happen to a family. To pull oneself out of the emotional wreckage is a mighty struggle. Each parent can be utterly devastated and unable to be supportive to mate or to surviving children. Other family members are shocked and unable to cope with the event. They do not know how to console or help us. Our friends wonder “how could such a thing happen?” They, too, do not know how to help us. We struggle with the “whys”...the unanswered questions and painful memories.

We who count ourselves as survivors...we’ve made it a year, two years; some of us are in the third year...would like to share a few thoughts.

First, you are not alone. We understand whatever you may be feeling for we have been there! Suicide can intensify the feelings of shock, denial, guilt, anger, depression...all a part of the grief process. The course of recovery is up and down. Give yourself plenty of time. You need a great deal of support, at least through the first year. The suicide of one’s child raises painful questions and doubts and fears. We can find ourselves in a spiritual crisis. We question our beliefs and may feel cut off from God. Through sharing with others and listening to others who have walked the same path, you may gain some understanding of your reactions, and learn some ways to cope.

But most of all, we, who are in the process of rebuilding our lives, have not forgotten the dark hours of those early days and weeks when we thought we could not live again. We cannot offer you any shortcut through the pain. There isn’t any. But you can help yourself along the way to healing. We can offer you support, encouragement and the hand of friendship.

JoAnn Dodson  
TCF, Louisville, KY

*“Everyone can master a grief but he that hath it.”*

Shakespeare

*A friend said to Socrates who had wept for his dead son, “Why do you weep?”  
Nothing can bring him back.” Socrates replied, “That is why I weep.”*

## Thanksgiving— A Time of Meditation

Thanksgiving—a time of meditation and thankfulness. Thanksgiving—a time of bitter pain and haunting memories for many bereaved parents. “How will we cope with the holidays?” “How will we survive this happy time?” “What is there to be thankful for?”

These questions toss upon our souls at times, at the very dark times, and taunt us with doubt and fear. Fighting the creeping bitterness, we wait and long for the days of January.

As the years pass, however, the holidays are no longer totally tinged with horror and emptiness. As the acceptance of the death settles in our hearts, the holiday smiles become more genuine. At least some of the warmth can return.

But for parents who have only recently (and recently can encompass months or years) suffered the death of a child, the holidays are bleak indeed.

Perhaps the most important thing to remember is that despondency and sorrow at this time of year are normal. What else could be expected of a grieving parent? Joy? Laughter? A sense of overflowing love and outstretched arms? No—never.

But as all bereaved parents know, these very emotions, these emotions that seem so alien at this time in our lives, are often expected and even demanded. We are not only expected to forget; we are also expected to be filled with joy.

*What can we do?*

We can refrain from demanding too much of ourselves. We can recognize that at this point, we are emotionally exhausted, we are lonely and we are sad. Maybe we are also angry, guilty and/or bitter. The feelings that arrive with the beginning of a holiday without our beloved sons and daughters are not to be ignored or pushed aside into the corners of our hearts.

By recognizing all of this, we can say “no” to situations or people, even loved friends, who will create more pain. We can cry, silently or loudly, without shame. We can long for the essence of our children and we can remember them with love.

The dreams of lifetimes die when children die. The hurt is often nearly unbearable. But, if we allow ourselves the freedom of grief and sorrow, we also open the paths to new happiness and new hopes and new dreams.

And the child who was a part of us will live in our memories and our hearts. I recently read a child’s book about beginnings and endings, depicting how days don’t end but night begins; autumn marks the beginning of winter; and leaves fall from the tree to the ground and feed the earth for new life. Death is a final ending to life on earth. For bereaved parents, however, who suffer the pain, the tragedy, the terrible doubts, the ending of a life can be a beginning of new feelings, new understanding, and hopefully, new compassion. But first, we need to follow the instincts of our souls and allow our bodies and hearts to grieve.

TCF, Terre Haute, IN



## On This Fourth Thanksgiving

As this fourth Thanksgiving approaches since Kevin’s death, I look back to the first one. My thoughts at that time consisted of, “I will not pray and give thanks for anything to anyone.” The main thing on my mind was my son. I couldn’t give thanks for his short life or his death. I had lived a fairly decent life, and this was my payment. Now as I look over those many hours and days that have passed, I have many thoughts and *thank-you’s*.

I give thanks for being me.

I give thanks for where our family is and for those who are still here to sit around the table.

I give thanks for my husband, who deserves a medal for withstanding my sharp and despairing tongue.

I give thanks for my daughter, who does light up my eyes with each dawn.

I give thanks for my friends, who were able to be there in the sorrow and now share some joys.

I give thanks for my parents, who are able to understand my life’s paces.

I give thanks for all my Compassionate Friends, old and new; without them I wouldn’t be here holding this pen.

I give thanks that the painful grief has passed.

I give thanks for the almost “whole” feeling I now experience.

I give thanks for our Kevin and for what he has given us in both life and death.

But mostly I give thanks for today.

Patricia Barwood  
TCF, Stamford, CT

*The name of your dead child  
is a magic word.*

*Did you Know?*

*At any given moment—*

*Whether busy or still—*

*Stop.*

*And think or say that name:*

*Something will happen*

*And whatever that something is,*

*Let it happen—*

*Even if it be tears.*

*The name of your child  
is a magic word*

*To heal your heart.*

Sascha

## Grief and Marriage

When our son was killed, I remember thinking through the haze of pain that this most horrifying of life experiences would somehow bring us closer. Sharing the loss of a child created and loved by both of us for twenty years would surely deepen the bond between us. I was in for a surprise.

We clung almost blindly to each other until the shock began to give way to ugly reality. As we each moved to our individual pattern of grieving, differences began to emerge. I felt like a time bomb about to explode. I needed desperately to talk about our son. My husband refused to verbalize his feelings and became angry at my overtures. I stopped trying to communicate.

This was beyond my comprehension. Where was my helpmate, my best friend? I felt rejected, unloved and terribly alone. Anger overwhelmed me as I bitterly realized that I wasn't going to be able to share my grieving with the person who meant the most to me in the world. I knew that many marriages fail after the death of a child. Dear God, how could we possibly survive an additional tragedy?

We attended a few Compassionate Friends meetings, and then I continued alone. The gentle acceptance of others who had lost children permitted me to talk or cry without guilt. Our problem was definitely not unique; many other parents expressed similar frustrations. So many couples experience marital difficulties after the death of a child that it is now considered the norm. We weren't going crazy; and just because our grieving styles were different didn't mean that our whole marriage would fall apart. My anger began to dissipate as I slowly faced the fact that I had been placing unrealistic expectations on my husband. Hurting at least as much as I, he simply could not meet my needs for support.

Much later, the knowledge that support had been there all along from my friends—if I had only asked for it—saddened me. I had to admit that I simply had been too proud to reveal myself as a suffering person in need of help. I will be forever grateful to Compassionate Friends for being there with loving, open arms.

We began to have some honest discussions, agreeing that we needed each other's nurturing in order to survive and find meaning in life. We learned to respect each other's feelings. We tried to please each other in little ways: a hug, a special meal, anything that expressed caring. Patience with each other smoothed over many rough moments. Time spent alone together was very healing. It took a conscious decision from both of us to try harder. Some days, we didn't have any energy left when grief was particularly painful. It wasn't always easy as we couldn't talk about our son for a long time.

As I look back, I see that ignorance of grief and the impact it can have on a marriage was the basis for our problems. But in retrospect, how could we possibly have been prepared for the onslaught of paralyzing emotions that overwhelmed us? Anguish of this intensity can reveal a spouse you've never seen before. Deeply wounded, both of you will be inevitably changed from the experience of losing a child. Back then, understanding these simple facts would have immeasurably helped us.

Pat Retzloff  
TCF Oshkosh, WI

### *The Long Forever*

*You left us so quickly;  
there were no goodbyes.  
How long this forever,  
your death and our lives.*

*The sadness, the anger,  
the loneliness of three,  
preferring four always,  
how small, this new we.*

Genesse Bourdeau Gentry  
From *Stars in the Deepest Night—After the Death of a Child*



### **Future TCF National Conferences**

The staff of the TCF National work all year planning our national conferences. You may want to keep your calendar clear and plan to attend:

2020 - Atlanta, Georgia  
2021 - Detroit, Michigan  
2022 - Houston, Texas



## CANDLELIGHT MEMORIAL SERVICE—December 8, 2019

Regardless of past participation, **EVERY FAMILY WISHING TO TAKE PART IN THE MEMORIAL SERVICE MUST RETURN THIS FORM.**

**We need to receive it no later than Wednesday, November 27.**

**PLEASE DO NOT SEND FORMS OR PHOTOS TO THE TCF P. O. BOX—it is important that they go directly to Lamar.**

### MAIL TO:

Lamar Bradley  
4772 Cascade Drive  
Old Hickory, TN 37138

or

You may e-mail your child's photo to [lamar.bradley@comcast.net](mailto:lamar.bradley@comcast.net)

Be sure to include your child's name in the e-mail.

**Instructions:** A computerized process (Power Point) is used to display our children's pictures on the big screen. An original 5x7 photo (no copies, please) may be used. If a 5x7 is not available, any size will do; however, the 5x7 or larger is easier to process.

The original photo will be returned to you at the memorial service while the image will be stored for use next year.

**Place a sticky note on the back of the photo with the child's name clearly printed. Do not write on the photo itself.**

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please print the name as you wish it to be read at the service along with phonetic pronunciation, if needed.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will attend and am enclosing an original photo of my child. (First time in the memorial service.)

\_\_\_\_\_ I will attend and am enclosing a different photo of my child to be used in place of the photo you have from last year's service.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will attend and would like for you to use the photo you have saved from last year.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will attend and would like for my child's name to be called and I'll light a candle, but I will not have a picture shown.

Your name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

## Holiday Gifts for Children Needed

Each year, our chapter donates holiday gifts to children at a worthy establishment that works with children who are not living at home and are under care for the holidays. The children range in age from 6 to 18. For many of these children, these will be the only gifts they receive this holiday season. If you would like to help this year, you may participate by bringing new UNWRAPPED gifts to the TCF December 9 Memorial Service. Below is a list of the most requested items.

**Most Requested Items: (Gift wrapping supplies appreciated, but please, DO NOT WRAP THE GIFTS)**

Art supplies  
Toys from the movie Frozen  
Pre-paid Cell Phones (and minutes)  
DVD's (PG-13 and Under)  
DVD players  
MP3 Player  
Gift cards such as Game Stop, Wal-Mart, Target, Amazon  
I-tunes gift cards  
Current Rap/ Pop CD's (Teen Rated)  
CD Players/ Boom Box  
Gameboy Games (Teen Rated)  
Xbox Play Station Games (Teen Rated)  
Digital cameras  
Remote Control Cars, Trucks or Planes  
Girlie things like journals, gel pens, scrap booking items  
Board Games (Monopoly, Life, Mouse Trap, Jenga, Uno etc.)  
Barbie Dolls & Accessories for Barbie  
Matchbox/ Hot Wheels car play sets  
Lego Sets  
Books (Twilight, Harry Potter, Narnia, and current top sellers)  
Fashion Bracelets or crafting kits

Action Figure Toys  
Watches (Girls & Boys)  
Puzzles for teenagers  
Winter coats for teenagers, Hats/Gloves/Scarves  
Hair accessories  
Skateboards/helmets  
Footballs, Basketballs, Soccer balls etc. Nerf toys  
Anything Batman, Star Wars, Spiderman, Spongebob or current popular items

### Stocking Stuffers:

Matchbox cars  
Small notepads, pens and pencils  
Candy  
Decks of Cards  
Jewelry  
Hygiene products  
Billfolds and wallets, Cute little change purses for girls  
Makeup items/nail polish  
Socks

# *The Compassionate Friends*

P.O. Box 50833



**Nashville, TN  
37205**

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**November 2019**

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## Seasons

**H**uman pain does not let go of its grip at one point in time. Rather, it works its way out of our consciousness over time.

There is a season of sadness.

A season of anger.

A season of tranquility.

A season of hope.

But seasons do not follow one another in a lockstep manner. At least not for those in crisis. The winters and springs of one's life are all jumbled together in a puzzling array. One day we feel as though the dark clouds have lifted, but the next day they have returned. One moment we can smile but a few hours later the tears emerge.

It is true that as we take two steps forward in our journey, we may take one or more steps backward. But when one affirms that the spring thaw will arrive, the winter winds seem to lose some of their punch.

Robert Veninga in *A Gift of Hope: How We Survive Our Tragedies*  
(Little, Brown and Company: 1985)

